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Superstars of Culture Twinkle on Florida Beach

By ROBERT REINHOLD
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PALM COAST, Fla., Nov. 17—It may have seemed an odd setting for an intellectual debate on the great issues of the day: A luxurious resort hotel amid palmetto and myrtles on a desolate Florida beach, squads of hostesses in miniskirts, an audience of tanned men in blazers and white patent leather shoes and strawberry blonde women in pantsuits.

But 13 distinguished persons of thought and letters convened here for two days of "great dialogue on the human condition." They came at the behest and expense of the I.T.T. Community Development Corporation, an International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation subsidiary that is converting a reclaimed swamp into a huge town here along the Atlantic Coast of northern Florida.

The purpose was not to promote lagging land sales, said Dr. Norman Young, a psychologist who heads the development corporation. Rather, he said, it was dedicated to creating serious dialogue and making culture and thought as much a part of the new town as sun and sand.

Environmental Dispute

"I feel every community should be balanced between fun and depth of interest—this is a rare opportunity for me to set the tone of a community," said Dr. Young, who described the 93,000-acre development as "the most completely master-planned community in the world." The plan is currently mired in controversy over its environmental impact.

Dr. Young has high hopes for the symposium.

"As our serious essays and enlightenments are applied, so shall they radiate to the ultimate benefit of the com-

munity, to the state of Florida and the nation, so art and philosophy and culture can flourish, enabling all of us to grow a little bit more," he told the opening of the two-day sessions at the Sheraton Palm Coast Inn.

With that, the moderator, Prof. Melvin M. Tumin of Princeton, released what he called a "torrent of talent."

The Case of Thinkers

Indeed, the panel had everything needed for a Major Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Human Condition. There was a Distinguished Historian (Arthur Schlesinger Jr.), an Eminent Philosopher (Sidney Hook), a Nobel Economist (Gunnar Myrdal), a Widely Acclaimed Novelist (Saul Bellow), a Nobel Biologist (James D. Watson), a Great Teacher and Critic (Lionel Trilling), an Angry Black Activist (Vernon E. Jordan Jr.).

There was also a Militant Feminist, who denounced the "sinister record" of the conference sponsors, who paid her \$2,500 to appear. This role was played by Kate Millett, substituting for Gloria Steinem.

The other panelists were William F. Buckley Jr., Truman Capote, Leslie Fiedler, Harold Rosenberg and Chancellor-elect E. T. York of the State University system of Florida.

If many of the participants knew one another well from previous dialogues on the human condition, it was clearly a major intellectual event for Florida. Invitations were snapped up by scores of Florida college presidents and deans and cultural leaders, as well as Palm Coast residents.

Merv Griffin was there. The television talk show host eschewed his usual regimen of frothy Hollywood chitchat



Photographs for The New York Times by RICARDO FERRO

Vernon E. Jordan Jr., black activist, dozed off during Mr. Buckley's discourse

to debate with Gunnar Myrdal, James Watson and Arthur Schlesinger on the grass under the palms.

It was apparent that Dr. Young's visions of bringing culture to Florida were being fulfilled.

"This is going to give us something to talk about for weeks," said Al Sherman, a retired International Revenue Service accountant from New York now living in Palm Coast. He attended every session.

'I Love You' Autographs

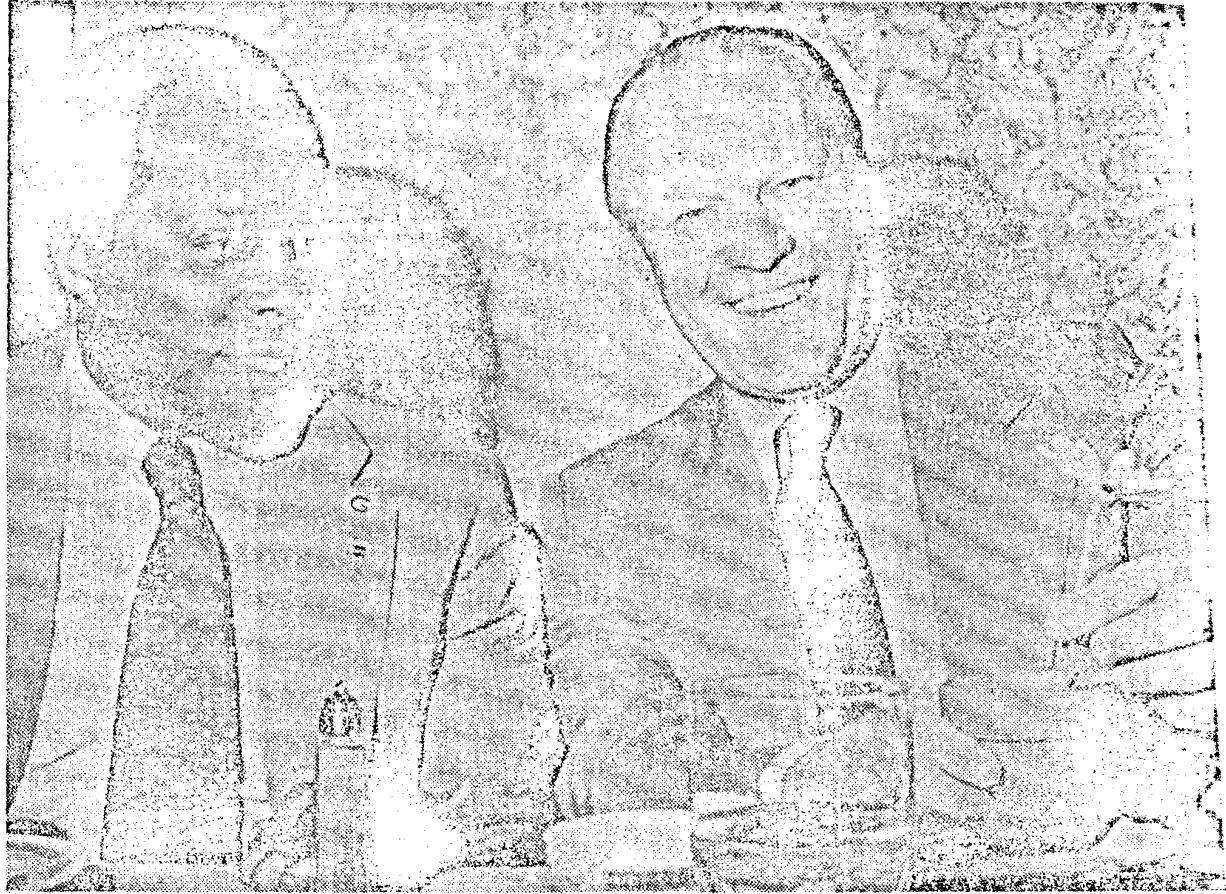
To those who found the talk from the podium a bit recondite, there were other attractions.

The intellectual superstars were pursued by groups of middle-aged women seeking autographs. A woman whose nametag identified her as "Ms. Margaret Johnson" may have been the first to get all

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Associated Press

Vice President Ford and Vernon E. Jordan Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, joke at luncheon.